

Panamanian tanker rescues 20 but 55 still missing

Leyte, Surigao landslide victims need your help

AN ANONYMOUS donor gave P1 million in answer to a call for aid for the landslide and flood victims of San Ricardo, San Francisco and other coastal towns in southern Leyte, and Marikina and other towns in Surigao del Norte and Surigao City.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Pinoy teen Denmark's new singing sensation

By Teede Cruz-Larrea Cover Story

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THE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS... ..don't last too long. Until there's nothing. The Public Relations Society of the Philippines gave out a gift-giving spree at the National Children's Hospital. Among the recipients are some cancer-stricken children, Josefa Puculan, Christian Poma, Shiro Poma, Nita Lata and Irene Lata.

No Christmas dinner for abandoned 'lola'

By Christina Y. Segura

Denmark with one's children, what could be a simpler Christmas wish?

But for Alicia C. Costa, 81, this Christmas will be like last year, and the year before that: her two children will remain in solitary prisons, two years to trial. And like Alicia will be stuck at the busy intersection of EDSA and Shaw Boulevard, where she has been begging for aid for at least the last 400 days.

The last time Alicia saw them was about two years ago, when her eldest Annelyn went to the province to settle down with her husband. Soon after, Annelyn sent for her brother Jerry to help her around the farm.

Annelyn moved to work for her mother but the province remained with Alicia.

Alicia Costa turned 81 only last Sunday the fourth Sunday of Advent.

Erap allowed to go to US

Hardest-hit village may be turned into a cemetery

US, Japan, UN lead int'l donors

By Jerome Aring

With offerings ranging from the victims of typhoons and floods in southern Leyte and northern Mindanao, the United States and Japan yesterday said they were giving over P11 million in assistance to the disaster-stricken areas.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs also provided an emergency grant of P1.8 million (\$20,000) and was "working to mobilize international donor response" after the earthquake.

US Ambassador to Manila Paula Romo-Romero, who accompanied President Macapagal-Arroyo in visiting Pampanga island on Tuesday expressed "great regret and sympathy" in behalf of President George W. Bush. Alicia Costa, 81, is buried.

By Juli Arnold and Jharvet Macapagal

SAN FRANCISCO, Southern Leyte—Bansagay Punta, the village hardest hit by last week's landslide, may be turned into a cemetery with the residents refused to return there.

San Francisco Vice Mayor Benjamin Arango Jr. said the members of the municipal council arrived at the decision during their session Monday. He said they were left with no choice because the residents of Punta, including Bansagay Chair Rudy Isidro, did not want to rebuild their homes and remember their horrible experience.

Isidro himself has reportedly signed his commitment not to return to the village. (See related story below)

San Francisco Mayor Diego Tubos and some provincial officials were amenable to the plan to convert Punta into a cemetery. Arango said it looked like a "ghost village" at night. "It is so quiet at night that it sends chills [down] my spine," he said.

The national operations in Punta were stopped on Monday night because of the rain.



But court order bars Christmas with mom

By Anand H. Nolas

THE SANDER GANDARAYAN yesterday gave his son Joseph a Christmas gift, after the special division court denied his petition to undergo knee surgery in the United States.

But the court's order and he was disappointed with the decision, because it also declared his petition for Christmas surgery, which would have allowed him time with his aging mother, "imprudent and wasteful."

The "petition to travel for medical reasons" is good for three months, starting within 10 days from the time Aranda receives the resolution and ending on March 31, 2004. But the petition also effectively confines Aranda to his current quarters in Camp Caping in Tinian Island, for the next week and a half.

As it is, Aranda told the tribunal, he may just meet his mother at the airport. He said he hopes to leave before Jan. 30.

"It's about time that they give me this chance to have an operation in the US because my health condition is deteriorating," he said in Filipino. "The pain is becoming unbearable."

Two weeks ago, he wrote the court saying he had stopped "before my bones grew to and my forehead hit the pavement."

The 10-page resolution, approved by four of the five members of the special court's special division, reverses the court's June 2, 2002 ruling denying a similar motion.

Aranda issued a press statement expressing disappointment over the court's decision on his Christmas petition.

"When I was old and my family told me that I was old, I was old," he said. "I was hoping that the court would now say petition from a humanitarian perspective and grant me a short period which will be with my mother."

He added that he had instructed his lawyers to prepare a motion for reconsideration on his petition.

"In the Christmas season, there is much to hope for ourselves. I am still hoping."

Punta is so remote that I often feel only typhoons know it exists

The author is a former reporter of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, who had covered the landslide that killed more than 200 of the residents.

By Leticia M. Salang Cover Story

IT IS difficult to describe how much Punta, a village in the remote municipality of San Francisco on Pampanga Island, Southern Leyte, means to my family.

I take my three children there regularly just so they will know the value of keeping one's family together.

In 1975, we were there to bury my grandfather's only request—that no matter where we were at that time, we would gather together in Punta on his 80th birthday.

In 1999, we were there to celebrate my parents' 50th wedding anniversary. And we started planning for my father's 80th birthday anniversary.

Punta, 1.5 kilometers away from the town center of San Francisco, is where we had our first marriage ceremony.

We needed to have built a new house every two years, between 2000 and 2002, we decided to hold the next party there in 2005. Arango who had expressed to the club and overseas have promised to start saving for the trip home.

And there is no more Punta to go home to. Most of the club's residents are gone. As of the last account, only three of the elderly, all

HOUSING became electric for San Francisco, the hardest hit. It is in Southern Leyte where President Macapagal-Arroyo's son Rudy Isidro's childhood home was destroyed. The holiday road took back to the Presidential Palace in Tuesday morning was affected by the landslide. Arroyo's son's home was destroyed by the landslide upon a weekend visit.



Tanker rescues 20 but 55 still missing

By Joelle F. Torio Southern Leyte correspondent

PERDIO PROVINCE CITY—A Panamanian tanker on Monday plucked from choppy waters 10 of the 55 passengers and crew members of a wooden-hulled boat that sank a day earlier off Pampanga, while a Philippine reconnaissance plane on Tuesday spotted the wrecked craft through fog.

May and Coast Guard officials yesterday said search and rescue operations were continuing for the missing passengers and crew of the 65-ton M.T. Piny, which sank at 1 p.m. Sunday while on its way to Marikina Point in Marikina.

The vessel left Pampanga in Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi, a cluster of islands in the Sulu Sea, at 5:30 p.m. Sunday despite the inclement weather.

Capt. Gerardo Malabanan, may spokesperson, and the navy Pacific Fleet rescued the 10 survivors aboard a life raft at 7 p.m. Sunday near Pampanga Strait, which lies between Balabac Island in the southern tip of Palawan and Malaysia's Borneo island off the northern tip of Sumatra.

WEATHER FORECAST

12/23/03: Heavy and broken clouds; light to moderate rain; 24-30 deg. with occasional squalls; moderate to heavy rain; 30-35 deg. with occasional squalls; moderate to heavy rain; 30-35 deg. with occasional squalls; moderate to heavy rain; 30-35 deg. with occasional squalls.

Source: PAGASA, Manila, 12/23/03, 11:30 AM

Second FRONTPAGE

Leyte slides revive call for total log ban

By Michael San Juan and Viki Cooveria

ADMINISTRATION Sen. Francis Pangilinan has called for the immediate implementation of a total log ban in the wake of the deadly floods and landslides in Southern Leyte that claimed the lives of more than 200 people.

Pangilinan said the total log ban should cover all timber harvest and should be imposed for a limited period of 10 years to allow the country's timber base to recover from the devastating and illegal logging that has been going on for decades.

Pangilinan's proposed measure immediately received support from Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Jovito Salonga.

"There must be the responsibility to create an environment where these incidents are minimized," said Pangilinan who intends to sponsor the measure when Congress convenes on Jan. 22, 2004.

The senator said the government has the responsibility to create an environment that will minimize incidents such as the flood-

struck Leyte which has been blamed partly on deforestation.

The government is currently implementing a silvicultural log policy.

Amid the worsening chaos for the environment department in recent for the Dec. 20 tragedy in Southern Leyte and northern Samar, Mindanao, Senate Management Bureau Director Remy deza yesterday issued the interim flooding and landslides were not caused by illegal logging operations.

Following allegations that big-time logging syndicates were behind the calamity, a lot of people in Samar Island, deza said it was the construction of houses in flood-prone areas and belonged to "small private owners" who agricultural lands that caused the devastation.

The said three senators gathered from the island recently real up as construction material for the flood-prone areas.

After consultation with House leaders, deza blamed the tragedy on the unavailability of timber that left on Leyte with the watershed.

"It's like suddenly dumping a pile of water on a pile of gravel that used to be absorbed

using only gravel," he said in Filipino, describing the disaster today was similar.

Given, in a press conference on Monday afternoon when he called the "increased" all-around development to climate change brought locally "global warming."

Accord with local government should "be more conscious" of the impact of human activities in their jurisdiction.

They can start by checking whether houses are built on low-lying areas that "used to be rivers," he said.

One was clearly the case of one of the victims villages, he said.

Deza said a limited ban would log law would "be ineffective measure."

Instead, said the country would have been under a total log ban had it not been the Spanish Colonies in Samar.

"Congress approved a total log ban in 1995, but President Estrada had the executive committee signed on it did not become law," said deza.

To help the logging and timber industries to be effectively control logging, Pangilinan said Congress should make funds available to the country budget allocation can be made.

Musical chairs in Cabinet looms

By GRC Cabanogian

With a Cabinet dismissed by a

majority of resignation and a death in cross works, President Arroyo is expected to reshuffle his Cabinet in the near future.

A reshuffling of the Cabinet is expected because the President is expected to reshuffle his Cabinet in the near future. The President is expected to reshuffle his Cabinet in the near future.

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Palace on FPJ: The more the merrier

By GRC Cabanogian, Jr.
Johel Lading-Lading
and Christine S. Arreola

THE PALACE IS NOT

the biggest invitation list in a decade for the President. It's a list of names for the President's 100th birthday.

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Erap allowed to go to US

By Greg Dela Cruz

ing that the historical pattern of the special division will grant my wish to be with my mother for the holidays."

Worsening health

In his ruling, the court cited Estrada's deteriorating health and the fact that Estrada's wife requires provision of care upon which the public trust for Estrada's assets must be "protected."

"When the accused first sought permission to go abroad for medical treatment, there was no evidence that he used to lose the use of his limbs should his ailment remain untreated. Thus, in balancing the interest of the state to effective administration of justice against respondent's right to doctor of his choice, the Court decided in favor of the latter," the court said.

"The district court gave the Court the opportunity to reconsider its ruling and bring into question principle of equity as applied in the dissemination of respondent's funds which will eventually lead to his demise," the court said.

Paralysis

In addition, the court gave full credence to the testimony of Dr. Antonio S. Calano, a spine specialist at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, who stated that Erap's spinal cord was "compressed" and "irreversible," which may result in the former leader's "loss of the lower extremities."

Although Calano admitted that a brain replacement operation, which would mean the compression of Erap's spinal cord, could be done here, the spine surgeon also said Estrada was not



STRADA: Good news and bad

that to choose his own doctor.

Estrada wants his longtime law counsel Christopher Bion of the Madrid Medical Center to operate on him.

"The foregoing considered, the Court cannot but be inclined to its decision against his doctor of one's pick and hospital, this little apart considering his health which will lead to paralysis," the justices said.

Crim scenario

In the light of respondent's condition and refusal to take surgery here even as the court's judgment threatens his loss of movement, the Court is keen to maintain the status quo and take the grievance to the Supreme Court in Manila. Consequently, justices are prohibiting anyone from seeking medical help abroad via respondent's fund in his custody, with the judicial system preserved, after wrongly assuming one healthful and without justice. "(Erap) will allow himself to travel in the United States of America," the court said.

PI-N travel bond

A travel bond of P1 million was imposed.

The resolution was signed by Presiding Justice Maria Clara Aquino and Associate Justice Antonio Leviste (en banc), Justices Claudio Reyes and Antonio Carandang (en banc), Associate Justice Edgardo Sison (en banc), and Associate Justice Antonio Carandang (en banc). The justices also cited the Supreme Court's decision in 1997 that a judge is not bound to follow the majority opinion of the court in a case involving a matter of public interest.

He cited the Supreme Court's decision that "a person's right to travel is subject to the usual restrictions imposed by the very necessity of safeguarding the interests of justice."

Apert from having "intentionally misled" the court, the justices also stated that Estrada was being very dishonest in his attempt to avoid the court's decision by seeking to go abroad.

He stated that all efforts to prevent Estrada from leaving the country are being undertaken by the court.

The court also ordered Estrada to pay the costs of the case, including the costs of the court's decision, and to pay the costs of the court's decision.

4PN hears

In a preliminary hearing on Friday, the court ordered Philippine National Police (PNP) General Hermenegildo Salazar to submit four police reports to the court. The court also ordered Salazar to submit four police reports to the court.

Estrada was also ordered to submit four police reports to the court. The court also ordered Estrada to submit four police reports to the court.

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Police reaction

Manila police said they will continue to monitor Estrada's movements and will be ready to arrest him if necessary.



WORLD CLASS singer-in-the-making Larry Laine, Christian Phares, is pronounced the new singing "star" after beating 1,500 contestants in a Danish TV singing contest.

PHOTOS

Pinoy teen Denmark's newest singing idol

By Greg Dela Cruz

because he's Filipino, with the blackest eyes and white straight black hair.

He is named Christian Phares, 18, and he's only 18. He was the winner of a singing contest in Denmark, which was held in Copenhagen. He was the winner of a singing contest in Denmark, which was held in Copenhagen.

The contest was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. He was the winner of a singing contest in Denmark, which was held in Copenhagen.

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The rest of the 16- to 18-year-olds were eliminated.

Judges delight

Hundreds of thousands of viewers who watched the contest were delighted to see a Filipino win the contest. The judges were also delighted to see a Filipino win the contest.

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CFW men

A native of Manila, Estrada spent eight years away from his mother Maria Laine, who made him. They were married in 2001, when Estrada was 18 years old.

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No early decision on RP claim to 49th gold

By Mark Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE Olympic team will have to wait a little longer to claim its 49th gold medal in the Rio de Janeiro Games.

After Vice President Arroyo and Sen. Enrile visited athletes in the Philippines before the 2000 Olympics, the IOC has not yet made a decision on the recommendation of the International Olympic Committee, known for its early decision on the recommendation of the IOC.

"This was a very good decision," he said. "I was very happy to see the IOC's decision on the recommendation of the IOC."

Sen. Enrile, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

MONDAY SHOCKERS

Blu Star gets back at Fash

IT TAKES A SEVERE MINORITY
After Vice President Arroyo and Sen. Enrile visited athletes in the Philippines before the 2000 Olympics, the IOC has not yet made a decision on the recommendation of the IOC.

With Luis Gomez providing a lot of everything, the 20-year-old Blu Star...
STANDINGS
Blu Star 1-0
Fash 0-1
...
Blu Star 1-0
Fash 0-1



ALDO CORTES/OF BASKETBALL/49th gold medal in the Rio de Janeiro Games.

Triumphant return for Jayvie; Negredo prevails



MEETINGS Jayvie Arroyo returned to the ring on Monday night, winning the 10th round...
Negredo, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

Blu Star won't need to wait a long time to claim its 49th gold medal in the Rio de Janeiro Games...
Fash, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

New PBA TV partner ...

After Vice President Arroyo and Sen. Enrile visited athletes in the Philippines before the 2000 Olympics, the IOC has not yet made a decision on the recommendation of the IOC.

Puerto Princesa hosting Athens boxing qualifier

By Dennis G. Lopez
THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA is set to host the Athens boxing qualifier...
Sen. Enrile, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

BIS, La Salle-A stay unbeaten

REMARKABLE International School Bis and La Salle-A stayed unbeaten in their first round games...
Sen. Enrile, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

Christmas blessing on a bus to Subic

It's the day before Christmas, and every body has a very merry time...
Sen. Enrile, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

Bar Eye

BAR EYE
The day before Christmas, and every body has a very merry time...
Sen. Enrile, however, said he's confident that the committee will decide on the recommendation of the IOC.

Lakers' Hollywood fall and rise steal the show

SHOOTER—From around the world, eyes turned to Los Angeles as the Lakers returned to the top after being defeated. The Los Angeles Lakers dominated the new basketball season from start to finish.

In winning 12 straight games after a 10-game losing streak, the Lakers made a sparkling debut. Tim Duncan and Alvin Williams have been named to the team.

But it was the Lakers' Hollywood fall and rise that stole the show. The Lakers began the year ending their fourth consecutive NBA crown but were ousted by eventual champion San Antonio Spurs in a 4-2 series.

A single season with relative success.

Shooting guard Ron Howard, who was named to the team, was named to the team. The Lakers began the year ending their fourth consecutive NBA crown but were ousted by eventual champion San Antonio Spurs in a 4-2 series.

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Rodman plays anew, plans return to NBA

DETROIT—Dwight "The Bad Guy" Rodman, the former basketball great known for his on-court antics, has agreed to return to the NBA.

Rodman, who was named to the team, was named to the team.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY [Name] for the [Publication] Denver during the NBA game.

Nuggets dump Grizzlies; Jazz clobber Bulls

DENVER—Anthony Leonard scored 24 points and Andre Miller had 22 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Denver Nuggets to a 106-93 win over the Memphis Grizzlies in one of three games in the NBA on Monday.

Leonard was in 100 percent of the game, scoring 24 points for Memphis. In Philadelphia, the Grizzlies beat the Bulls 106-93 in a 107-75 win over the Chicago Bulls. In Chicago, the Bulls beat the Bulls 106-93 in a 107-75 win over the Chicago Bulls.

Parker L'Equipe winner

PARIS—The French basketball team won the 2001 FIBA World Cup in the Philippines.

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A single season with relative success.

Beckham biggest newsmaker

LONDON—England's captain, David Beckham, was the most popular player in the 2001 FIBA World Cup in the Philippines.



PHOTOGRAPH BY [Name] for the [Publication] Beckham during the game.

Top 12: The stories that defined the year in Sports

1. The 2001 FIBA World Cup in the Philippines was the most popular event in the world.
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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor: Tony Reyes

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BREATH OF DOWN
 Devos breaks at the midnight Mass in the St. Francis Church in North Star City to attend midnight Mass. Millions observe the Christmas tradition of midnight Mass to welcome the coming of Christmas Day.

OFWs' 'one-stop' center set up in Clark ecozone

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Overseas Filipino workers, about five million of whom are in the United States, are being helped by the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) to find jobs in the Philippines.

A one-stop center providing fast service in the processing of travel and work papers has opened in the Clark OFW Center in the Office of the Presidential Assistant for North Luzon.

Called the OFW "One-Stop Shop," it is located in the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) and is the first of its kind in the Philippines. It is the first of its kind in the Philippines.

The OFW, the Department of Labor and Employment, Professional Regulation Commission, National Trade Development Commission, Philippine Overseas Employment Agency and the Overseas Filipino Workers' Administration have been joined to establish the center, according to Presidential Assistant for North Luzon Region Raul R. R. R.

He said the Commission on Higher Education, the Department of Health, the Social Development Secretariat, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine Health Insurance Corp., Re-

gional Workers Office, the Social Security System, and the Bureau of Education and Skills Development are also working on field offices in Clark.

Clark said these facilities offices in Clark would "provide the path to a convenient location" from where they could get passports, visas, overseas employment documents and other needed documents.

He said these were under way to put all these offices under one building in Clark's single-story modern Clark. The plan includes the construction of a playground where OFWs can relax their children while they have their documents processed.

Through the center, OFWs from Northern and Central Luzon need not travel to Manila to have their papers processed. Instead, they will be able to get their "one-stop" OFW Center in Clark, which is located in the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Clark said the center is a "one-stop" center for OFWs. It is a "one-stop" center for OFWs. It is a "one-stop" center for OFWs.

GMA asked to help stop drop in sugar prices

By Carlo F. Cuervo
 Development Bureau

MANILA—Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Estrada and Negros Island Region Governor Arsenio Dela Cruz are appealing to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to help stop the drop in the price of sugar.

The drop in the price of sugar is expected to be a major problem for the sugar industry in the region.

"I appeal to the President to do what she can to help the sugar industry," Estrada said.

He said the sugar industry is in a "critical" situation and that the government should do what it can to help.

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Leyte tragedy wakes Zambo folk to dangers of logging

COBALEDO CITY—We do not want the Leyte tragedy to happen in Zamboanga del Norte," said Mayor Edgardo S. Sison, who said the people of Zamboanga City and Zamboanga del Norte should be warned about the dangers of logging.

Church leaders, non-governmental organizations and various agencies have urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to take a look at the situation in Leyte and to take steps to prevent a similar tragedy from happening in Zamboanga.

"We are not in a hurry to take a look at the situation in Leyte," Sison said. "We are not in a hurry to take a look at the situation in Leyte."

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PHOTO—The scene of a logging operation in the mountains of the Cordillera region.

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Mayor in trouble for pickup purchase

By Alex V. Del
 Pinar del Rio Bureau

ROMAÑA CITY—The mayor of the Municipality of Pinar del Rio, Carlos Dela Cruz, is in trouble for purchasing a pickup truck.

The mayor is accused of purchasing the truck for his personal use.

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POST-DOS PALMAS PLAN

EU envoys confident of Palawan tourism

MANILA—The European Union has expressed confidence in the Palawan tourism plan.

The plan is to develop the island of Palawan as a major tourist destination.

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BUSINESS

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Singapore bourse keen on acquiring 30% stake in PSE

By Elma K. Torjesen

THE SINGAPORE Stock Exchange is interested in acquiring a 30-percent stake in the Philippine Stock Exchange on condition that there would be dual-listing between the two exchanges, an official of the PSE said.

While local brokers would have welcomed the Singapore exchange as a strong partner, the proposed condition has not worked with a number of brokers who fear they would lose business which has traditionally consisted of orders between clients.

"We will run it close, if they want because most of the fund managers are based in Singapore and 70 percent of our market are foreign orders," a local broker said in a recent session. "If they want to invest, good, but that suggestion must be made to a pre-condition."

The broker doubted that local groups wanting to invest in Singapore-listed companies could understand the way of business here for large clients. He noted that most overseas investors of local companies mostly of funds in some instances rather than capital.

The broker also declared that the Singapore

business@pdi.com.ph

WHAT'S INSIDE

- PNOOC-EDC sells part of 10% stake in Malampaga natural gas project B2
- BSP vows to keep key rates steady in 1st half B3



Stocks end up

If PSE could begin trading at 4,000 points, it would be a record for the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) ended its trading session at 4,000 points.

There were still no trades in the PSE. We still expect some points of trading in the next session.

The PSE's All Composite Index ended the day at 4,000.00 points.

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Traffic, traffic, everywhere.
**DON'T WORRY,
 DRIVE HAPPY.**

PETRON
Ultron


The Ultimate Release
 from Engine Stress.
 From Petron.

AVAILABLE IN YOURS, EXTRA, MALLS, RACE



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 or call us at 87-8888 (toll-free) or 888-8888 (toll-free)

Editor Chelo Banaag-Fernando
 Chief of Correspondence Peter Panter

HOLIDAY HUBRAH

Here's the recipe for our special Christmas issue. A stylish and colorful Christmas dinner, a secret haven for

bargain-hunters and ukay-fanatics, a gift-shopping date with a hoop hottie, a time machine designed to take

you back to your favorite holiday memories, ways to give more of yourself this season, a list of

things to do before the clock strikes twelve, traditions new and old and surveys galore—all made with lots of

love. But read fast, dear reader. Today is a special day. Every

second spent with your family counts. Have a 2BU! Christmas!

2BU! SURVEY

If I were the jolly fat guy in red...

By Nina Mark Saldan
 2BU Correspondent

Santa Claus is generally portrayed fat, jolly and clad in red, but one of the people who takes the spotlight every Yuletide season.

Pick a delight full of gifts, he slips down chimneys and leaves neatly wrapped presents for good boys and girls who behaved all year long. But we believe he's not as chipper and out of this world.

Although some people believe he's starting the real reason for the season, and many doubts and questions have been raised about him (Can he really fit in a chimney? How does he move without disintegrating?), there is no denying he is a superly powerful guy. The gift-giving and protecting. A lot of people would love playing to be in his shoes.

Here are some scenarios and the stuff they'd do if they were

Santa's son.

If I were Santa I would...

"...take the grandchildren and bring them to our City"—Sherry Yu, 11, who plans to treat her friends at her City-on her birthday.

"...give the gift of love to people like the Galins, Isidoro and Isidro, and to others who have the power to create chaos in the world. May they be reunited by the spirit of the season so they can work together in being peace and unity in the world. Merry Christmas you"—Marjorie Cruz, 12, who likes the song "Gift of Love."

"...like other people to be happy as I would be happy to be myself"—Jenny, 15, who enthusiastically spent his 15th birthday pay.

"...make traveling to Europe into fun"—Paw, 15, who absolutely doesn't have a clue.

"...make Christmas a year-long

holiday"—Rene A., 24.

"...change my wardrobe"—Jenny, 15, who doesn't like O'Connell.

"...give everyone a box full of love and peace. I think that's what we need this time, when everything seems to be in chaos"—Christopher, 13.

"...give every Filipino one million pesos"—Shane Flores, 22, who wanted to answer "Legalize marijuana" but was afraid his older sister might read it.

"...enroll in Golf's Gym"—Micaela, 18, who doesn't need a reason to say yes.

"...take my cat with me around the world and take a photo of it in every country, the great way to commemorate and remember me by when he grows old"—Gandy Maudslaw, 20.

"...grant the wishes of those living in Calabar Aron"—Jill.

"...live all beautiful moments"—Mia, 20, who believes her a good friend.

"...give Rudolph and the others a break and use a jetplane instead"—Kristal, 17, who is sick and tired of everybody having a version of "Learning to Fly" plane."

"...gift myself with a year's supply of movie tickets and shopping credits"—Adrian Pineda, 23, who doesn't share his toys.

"...fly me back"—Iselle Tabares, 23, whose friends would look good in any color.

"...make little houses"—Reney-Catherine, 21, who is not planning to have little houses any time soon.

"...be kinder to the reindeer by buying some weight"—Reney-Fabrizio, 28, who is kind to animals.

"I don't believe in Santa Claus, but I'd be a very creative Jesus"—Amanda, 27, who believes in Jesus Christ.

E-mail the author at baez@inquirer.com

26th LIFESTYLE

To be you.

For more information, visit www.philly.com or call 1-800-828-8282.

A marvelous last-minute shopping trip with Marvin Cruz



UP's hoop heartthrob does a quick 'tiangge' detour to buy gifts for his family

"UP's 'Something for the Season'?"

Text and photos by Emmanuel R. Papa
26th Correspondent

MARVIN Cruz made an impression when he helped lead his high-school team, the UP Integrated School, to its first ever UAAP junior basketball championship last 2002. When he started UP's college hoop team this year, he generated more noise. That noise, portrayed from Bulacan, showed UAAP aficionados that he could take on serious court games (as well as the big men). With his patented "dunk-pass-slash-stop" jump-shot and knee-stopping drive to the basket, he quickly earned the moniker "Marvelous Marvin."

By Emmanuel R. Papa



CHOOSING the right wallet...



"This soap looks cool."



"I'll go home tonight."



"I'll go home tonight...a, well, not long ago!"

